United Nations A/CN.10/PV.194

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

194th Meeting
Monday, 15 May 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun . . . . . (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

General exchange of views on the three substantive agenda items *(continued)*

Ms. Kurokochi (Japan): Let me at the outset extend my heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. The Japanese delegation is confident that, under your able guidance, the 1995 substantive session of the Commission will be a particularly fruitful one. I assure you that you may count on the full cooperation of my delegation as you discharge your important responsibilities.

The NPT Review and Extension Conference was concluded at the end of last week after four weeks of intensive and often difficult negotiations. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to reiterate its satisfaction with the outcome: the decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely.

Japan is steadfast in its belief that the NPT will continue to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and will also contribute to further progress on nuclear disarmament. It is imperative for all States Parties to the Treaty, and especially the nuclear-weapon States, strictly to observe the letter and the spirit of the decisions taken in parallel with the decision to extend the NPT.

In this regard, it is highly regrettable that China conducted a nuclear test explosion today, immediately after the agreement was reached at the NPT Conference that the utmost restraint should be exercised in the area of nuclear testing. This latest test is in addition to those it conducted in June and October last year. Japan strongly urges China not to repeat such tests.

Three items have been placed on the agenda for this year's session of the Disarmament Commission: the process of nuclear disarmament, international arms transfers and the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

In recent years, the prospects for nuclear disarmament seem to have become more promising. My delegation hopes that the Commission will achieve tangible progress this year in nuclear disarmament, benefiting from the in-depth consideration of this issue during the past four weeks. Japan attaches great importance to the early conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty — no later than 1996 — which would contribute to nuclear disarmament and to nuclear non-proliferation, and also welcomes the agreement reached at the Conference on Disarmament in March on the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a fissile-material cut-off treaty.

This cut-off treaty, once concluded, will be another important step forward on the path to nuclear disarmament and to nuclear non-proliferation. My delegation will spare no effort to contribute to the earliest possible conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and also to the early start to and steady progress in the cut-off negotiations.

While the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban and cut-off treaties are important for further progress in disarmament and non-proliferation, it would be a mistake to devote ourselves exclusively to nuclear issues. The armed conflicts of the past 50 years have been fought

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largely with conventional weapons, conventional weapons that have taken a tremendous toll in human life. And now, with the end of the cold war, we are witnessing growing instability in many regions of the world as long-suppressed ethnic and nationalist rivalries have re-emerged. In addition, various countries with substantial arms industries depend on arms exports as an important source of foreign currency. These are just some of the factors that are making it increasingly difficult to curb the flow of conventional arms.

Last year, the Commission expedited its consideration of measures to restrict transfers of and illicit trade in conventional weapons. It is the view of my delegation that, while the legitimate security needs of any State must be respected, it would be an important achievement if we could develop some guidelines of a political nature, as well as practical ways and means, to ensure that restraint is exercised and that conventional arms are acquired and supplied in a responsible manner.

In this respect, the Chairman's working paper presented at last year's session contains several ideas worthy of our consideration. My delegation is also, of course, willing to consider any other specific proposals that may be forthcoming. The issue of arms transfers, including illicit arms transactions, concerns countries all over the world and is closely related not only to countries' political and security situations but also to their economic and other needs. Perspectives on this issue therefore differ from country to country. In particular, the problem of the illicit trade in small arms is closely related to social and political unrest in recipient States and to their inability to control the influx of weapons across their borders.

Although it would be difficult, given the complexities of the problem, to establish a set of standard measures that could be applied uniformly in all countries, it would nevertheless be a useful exercise to try to work out a number of feasible guidelines that every Member State might be expected to observe in conducting its arms transfers.

We believe that enhancing transparency and openness in arms transactions and national arms control policies is a valuable confidence-building measure and an important first step in coping with the issue of international arms transfers. Japan therefore hopes that a larger number of States will participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms so that the system can become truly universal. Moreover, we believe that the establishment, where appropriate, of regional registers tailored to the specific needs of the region can be useful in building confidence, and could contribute to stability and peaceful relations between the States concerned.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): At the very outset, Sir, I should like to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. I am confident that, under your wise and able guidance — the wise and able guidance of an old friend — the deliberations in the Disarmament Commission this year will lead to a successful outcome. Let me assure you that the delegation of Pakistan will extend its full cooperation in facilitating your task. My delegation is also looking forward to working closely with the Chairmen of the Working Groups.

This year's session of the Commission has a special significance since it is being held against the backdrop of a major decision made in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. The air of uncertainty which shrouded the proceedings last year has apparently been cleared. We can hope that now our discussions will be result-oriented, enabling us to achieve consensus on guidelines for nuclear disarmament.

Pakistan believes that the Commission, as a universal body for disarmament affairs, provides an appropriate forum for adopting non-discriminatory measures in the field of disarmament. Therefore, the role of the Disarmament Commission is of crucial importance in this post-cold-war era.

The end of ideological antagonisms has had a salutary impact on the international environment. Consequently, some progress has been made in the field of disarmament in recent years. The conclusion of START I and START II was a notable step towards nuclear disarmament. These bilateral agreements have been complemented by such multilaterally negotiated agreements as the chemical weapons Convention, and the Conference on Disarmament is now in the process of negotiating a comprehensive test ban treaty.

However, the process of disarmament has not kept pace with the dramatically changed political and security environment. We must remember that, despite the agreements for mutual reductions in nuclear weapons, approximately 10,000 nuclear warheads would still remain by the year 2003 in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States. The retention of such huge arsenals is not justifiable in the prevailing situation

We must respond promptly to the challenge of change and seize the opportunity to improve the international security environment. At the global level, there is a need to initiate negotiations between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. At the regional and subregional levels, equitable and non-discriminatory regimes would provide an effective framework for promoting nuclear non-proliferation. Such regimes have proven their efficacy in containing nuclear proliferation in Latin America and the South Pacific.

In our region, Pakistan has consistently endeavoured to address this problem and has put forward numerous proposals for non-proliferation on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis. These proposals include the simultaneous signatures by both Pakistan and India of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the simultaneous acceptance of full-scope safeguards; the mutual verification of nuclear facilities; a bilateral nuclear test-ban treaty; and a bilateral declaration renouncing nuclear weapons.

Pakistan has also advanced a proposal for conventional arms control in south Asia, because we believe that, with the existing imbalance in conventional arms in our region, it would be difficult to realize the goal of nuclear non-proliferation in south Asia. At the same time, we are willing to address the festering disputes and security problems that are the root cause of conflicts in our region.

The Commission will also review the achievements in the field of disarmament during the 1990s, which was declared the Third Disarmament Decade in General Assembly resolution 45/62 A. Some progress has been made in realizing these goals, but it still falls far short of the expectations which were raised following the end of the cold war. While taking stock of past performance, we should attempt to identify the areas where we could not make any headway and the reasons for our failure to do so.

This year, substantive discussions will be held on international arms transfers. Last year there were different views about how to approach this issue: whether international arms transfers should be discussed in general terms or whether the Commission should focus on illicit arms transfers, which are often associated with terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, mercenary soldiering and other destabilizing activities. We see merit in addressing this issue in a comprehensive manner because the line between legitimate and illegitimate arms transfers is not clearly defined.

Pakistan attaches high priority to the eradication of the illicit trade in weapons because it has been a victim of terrorism, destabilizing activities and organized crime. We hope that our discussions in this forum will contribute towards a better understanding of the threat posed by illicit arms.

It would be appropriate to mention that the Commission's recommendations should be without prejudice to the right of States to maintain armed forces for the purpose of defence and to provide them with necessary equipment, as clearly provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular in Article 51. We must also ensure the right of peoples to struggle for liberation from foreign occupation, as stated in General Assembly resolution 33/24 in which the Assembly

> "*Reaffirms* the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, particularly armed struggle". (*resolution 33/24, para. 2*)

Let me conclude by stating that the Disarmament Commission has acquired increased importance in the changed international security environment. It remains the only forum where Member States can deliberate on key security and disarmament problems and formulate guidelines on these issues. We need to take full advantage of its potential.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of my delegation, and on my own behalf, I extend our warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau elected for this new substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, which is taking place in the wake of a recent historic pronouncement by the international community. I am referring, of course, to the decision to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

On 10 February Argentina joined the global non-proliferation efforts by acceding to the NPT. This made it possible for us to participate as a full member in the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, where my delegation, from the very outset, advocated an indefinite and unconditional extension.

Argentina's work as one of the Vice-Chairmen of Main Committee II of the NPT Review and Extension Conference was carried out within that context.

Argentina's accession to the NPT was the culmination of a thorough foreign policy review process which led us to adopt clear and fully committed policies regarding the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Argentine Republic attaches very special importance to the Disarmament Commission as it is the only universal forum for studying issues specifically to do with disarmament. In that context, we hope that the Working Group on the agenda item entitled "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons" will be able to reach a consensus on a final text. That agenda item is an inevitable part of the post-cold-war scene given the possibility of arms reductions now the cold war has ended. Arms reductions are very important factors contributing to global stability, to which the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is fundamental for the equilibrium through which international peace and security can be guaranteed.

The Security Council's recent adoption of resolution 984 (1995) on positive and negative security assurances is part of the same framework. The adoption of that resolution has raised new expectations with regard to the sensitive process of nuclear disarmament.

To this we must add the progress made in the Conference on Disarmament towards a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty and the adoption of the mandate to negotiate a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

My country participated actively in the negotiations in Geneva and is committed to continuing to do so. In that connection, Argentina has pledged to cooperate on the seismic monitoring stations that will be needed to verify monitoring the future comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

At the regional level, with Cuba's recent signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we are continuing to make progress towards consolidating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America, thus discouraging a possible race for this type of weapon in the region and encouraging transparency and cooperation between the various Latin American countries.

On 4 March 1994 the Treaty between the Argentine Republic, the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the implementation of safeguards entered into force. It should also be emphasized that the joint Brazilian-Argentine system for accounting and control of nuclear materials implemented by the ABACC is in full and normal operation.

In 1994, the ABACC sent the IAEA its initial report on Brazilian and Argentine nuclear materials. Regular reporting of accounting data to the IAEA began in April, under the terms of the reporting system expressly provided for in the quadripartite agreement. In addition, the verification of designs and initial inventories of the facilities subject to the accounting and control system had been almost completed by December 1993. With regard to the implementation of the quadripartite agreement, the IAEA started inspections last June, and from that point onward the inspections by the ABACC were coordinated with those of the IAEA.

Illicit weapons transfers are one of the international community's greatest concerns, as they are a threat to the internal security of States and also to regional and global stability. Thus, they endanger peace itself. The present context is one that we think is promising in terms of finding suitable mechanisms for putting an end to this situation. For this to happen, there must be common, appropriate and effective criteria for monitoring international arms transfers. We consider the Disarmament Commission to be the proper forum in which to explore possible ways of making States' unilateral measures more effective, of harmonizing initiatives that have already been taken, of considering the adoption of additional national measures where necessary, and of promoting cooperation to eliminate illicit arms transfers.

Argentina is implementing a clear and committed policy on non-proliferation and control of arms transfers. It participates in and is promoting multilateral, regional, subregional and unilateral systems and regimes for controlling arms transfers with the goal of preventing the illicit arms transfers.

Domestically, the Argentine Republic enacted decree 603/92 of 9 April 1992, which imposed strict controls on the sale abroad of certain materials, equipment, technology, technical assistance and nuclear and missile-related services, and also of chemicals that could be used in the production or deployment of missiles and nuclear

chemical or bacteriological weapons. The provisions of that decree govern Argentina's export control regime for sensitive and military material, and is operated by the National Commission for the Control of Sensitive Exports and Military Materials. The Commission is composed of the Ministers of Defence, of Foreign Relations, of International Trade and Worship and of the Economy and Public Works and Services.

In this context, Argentina is actively coordinating with other States its policy on exports that could contribute to the production of weapons of mass destruction, with a view to trying to consolidate an effective international system in this area. My country's new regulations do not restrict legitimate trade, but rather incorporate international non-proliferation criteria into our national legislation.

With respect to the new preliminary item on our agenda, "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade", my delegation wishes to emphasize that it must be approached in the light of the substantial and tangible progress achieved over the past five years in the disarmament field. We hope that this will be the case.

Mr. Londoño-Paredes (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to begin, Sir, by expressing my delegation's great satisfaction at seeing you in the Chair at this session of the Disarmament Commission, and our hope that, under your able leadership, our deliberations will be crowned with success.

The Commission is meeting at a crucial time, just after last week's conclusion of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The indefinite extension of the NPT and the adoption of decisions on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and on strengthening the review process for the Treaty provide a fresh framework for progress on non-proliferation and for an end to the nuclear-arms race with a view to general and complete disarmament.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty must be viewed as a commitment by all Parties to strengthening it with a view to achieving its purposes and objectives, and not as a way of perpetuating nuclear weapons or the division of countries into nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States.

It is well known that weapons are not the reason for war, but that they are a necessary condition for it to occur. Hence, the United Nations has from its inception had as its goal disarmament, which is also the *raison d'être* of this Commission. While the horror of the use of nuclear weapons in the dying throes of the Second World War made Governments and the public aware of the threat of nuclear war and gave rise to such important steps as the signing of the NPT, there has been no similar awareness with respect to conventional weapons. Millions have been killed by conventional weapons in conflicts between and within States since the Second World War. The number of innocent lives taken everywhere by criminals of all kinds is also tragically high. It is by conventional weapons that blood is being shed, day after day throughout the world, and by conventional weapons that sovereignty of States is violated and citizens are terrorized.

For many years, terrorists and criminals of all kinds, encouraged by external and internal forces and possessed of weapons that are easy to acquire given the lack of serious, responsible controls, are wreaking havoc, principally in the developing countries. Yet terrorism has spread its criminal tentacles to developed countries everywhere while the authorities and their servants look on powerless. The weapons manufacturers' lobby, motivated by greed and the commercial interests of the few, has prevailed over the right of society at large to safety, integrity and peace.

In the past few years, prevention has been promoted as a strategy for avoiding conflicts breaking out at the international level; unfortunately, the usefulness of preventive measures in such a serious area as illegal arms transfers has not been recognized or given the same priority.

And where do the criminals' weapons come from? Who manufactured them? Who sold them? The chain of illicit arms trafficking begins with the uncontrolled production and sale of these weapons, and the cycle of death and destruction comes full circle with their use by criminals and terrorists. The weapons that do murder in town and in country are not home-made; they are manufactured by official or private businesses without adequate controls in certain States.

The paradox of our time is that we in the developing countries have not been able to enjoy the dividends of the end of the cold war but have very quickly begun to pay its costs. From the arsenals accumulated during the bipolar confrontation, considerable amounts of arms have been illegally diverted to fuel international and internal conflicts

and increase the capacity of criminals to commit criminal acts. The paradox extends to the far from inconsiderable diversion of weapons freed up by peace processes and the demobilization of the opposing forces. Thousands of men, women and children are the nameless victims of new wars of annihilation prosecuted by armies that fly no flag.

It is inexplicable that the promotion of respect for and observance of human rights has been limited to other aspects without even marginal concern for monitoring the international arms transfers that help aggravate individual and collective intolerance. The time has come to try and condemn those who violate or contribute to the violation of human rights for commercial gain.

There has been discussion of international arms transfers within the United Nations for some time now. In this respect, we must recognize the particular importance of resolution 46/36 H, adopted by consensus in 1991. Since then there has been a lot of talk about the need for international cooperation to eradicate illicit arms trafficking and harmonize policies on arms transfers and the laws and administrative procedures for official acquisitions. However, we have not noticed any significant progress in this area. My country attaches very great importance indeed to this issue and has made proposals in this respect, including those in document A/CN.10/184, which the Commission is continuing to consider and which we will expand on and develop in the course of our deliberations.

Finally, I wish to refer very briefly to the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. My country supports including this as an item on the agenda and regrets the extreme brevity of the time we will have to consider it. As a preliminary remark, I feel that, of the important events since the beginning of the Third Disarmament Decade, I must point to the deliberations of the NPT Review and Extension Conference and stress the progress that has been made in the field of the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons, as is reflected in the signing of the 1993 chemical weapons Convention. However, we cannot but express concern at the feeble progress in other areas to which paragraph 4 of the Declaration refers.

Mr. Chandra (India): On behalf of the Indian delegation, I would at the outset like to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship. We are confident that, under your guidance, our deliberations will progress smoothly and successfully. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate the three Chairmen of the Working Groups. Our warm tribute is also due to the Ambassador of Benin, who so successfully chaired the work of the Disarmament Commission last year.

The Disarmament Commission this year has a daunting task before it. It has to consider three agenda items in just two weeks. It is unfortunate that the duration of this year's session has been so drastically curtailed. We feel that, in future, we must ensure that sufficient time is allotted to the Commission so that it can examine in depth the far-reaching implications of the agenda items before it, in keeping with its role as the premier deliberative body of the United Nations on disarmament matters.

The task before the Disarmament Commission at this year's session is the examination of the following three items: the process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons; international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991; and review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

Permit me to remark first on the third, new, agenda item: the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. The Commission is eminently positioned, at the half-way mark of the decade, to assess the progress made so far in the goals set out for the Decade and also to give direction and suggestions for the tasks that lie ahead. We should not be satisfied merely with reiterating the goals of the Declaration, but should be able to give specific suggestions.

The Declaration set, for the international community, common goals in the nuclear field and in the area of conventional weapons. In the nuclear field, the START I and II agreements, the unilateral withdrawal of tactical weapons from nuclear arsenals and the detargeting agreements are commendable steps in the right direction. Intensive negotiations continue on the comprehensive test-ban treaty, and consensus has been reached to set up an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a convention to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear devices. These steps, however, constitute only a technical management of the arms race, and are insufficient: they leave the international community far short of the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons recognized by the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. The international community must therefore, in the remaining

years of the Decade, squarely address itself to eliminating nuclear weapons completely.

Given the global reach of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament can be effectively and comprehensively addressed only globally — not on a regional basis — through universal, multilaterally negotiated and non-discriminatory agreements. The current favourable political climate provides a unique opportunity, which may never recur, for the international community to move in this direction; failure to do so may condemn mankind to live forever under the threat of instant incineration. Another landmark achievement has been the signing of the chemical weapons Convention, which now awaits entry into force. Work has also begun on finding ways to strengthen the biological weapons Convention.

On the question of transparency in armaments, an international consensus resulted in the setting up of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This is a useful beginning from which we can learn and build on over time.

On the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space, a lack of political will seems to have paralysed discussions in the Conference on Disarmament to the point of near inaction.

The question of how to prevent science and technology from being used to fuel the qualitative arms race is yet another major issue which needs to be addressed.

In our own region, we have proposed a number of disarmament-related confidence-building measures, some of which are already in place and some of which have yet to be accepted. We are also committed to resolving all differences peacefully and through bilateral dialogue and discussion.

Another important landmark of the Disarmament Decade will be the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament — as detailed in the consensus resolution at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly — which we feel should be held no later than 1997. The deliberations of the Disarmament Commission under the third item on the various issues cited earlier will be invaluable input for the special session.

The deliberations on the agenda item entitled "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons" is inextricably linked with the agenda item on the third disarmament decade. In our deliberations on nuclear disarmament, it would be unforgivable if we were to list only the commendable but nevertheless limited achievements of the last few years: this would only lull the world into a totally false sense of complacency. These achievements constitute only a small dent in the nuclear arsenals that have been amassed.

Even after the START reductions, there will be sufficient nuclear warheads to destroy human civilization many times over. There is continued dependence on the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. There is continued qualitative improvement in nuclear-weapon systems. Moreover, there is an expansion in the cold-war role of nuclear weapons to meet the so-called counter-proliferation scenarios targeted against Third World countries. It is difficult to comprehend this dependence on nuclear weapons today. With the end of the cold war, whatever relevance nuclear deterrence may have had in the eyes of its protagonists has vanished. These weapons are not needed, as there is no imaginable security threat and the nuclear-weapon States already posses superior conventional strengths for their national security.

There is today an increasing recognition of the final goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons, which we need to take advantage of by translating it into reality. What is needed is an international recognition of the irrelevance of nuclear weapons and their attendant doctrines. This recognition should be followed by an international commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and a multilaterally negotiated treaty to give effect to this commitment.

We understand that this is not a task that can be accomplished overnight. India had presented a phased systematic and practical time-frame in its action plan at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1988. This action plan provides for a stage-by-stage achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world and lays down obligations for all States, without discrimination, and recognizes the need for flexibility in achievement of the measures. To facilitate the achievement of this goal, India has been proposing a convention for the prohibition of the use and the threat of use of nuclear weapons. We believe that the time has come to build consensus on this idea.

We look forward to an early and successful conclusion of the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty and to an early start to negotiations on the convention on the

prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. These are interim measures. Pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, the nuclear-weapon States should also give negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States, assurances that are not qualified, not conditional and that are contained in a multilaterally negotiated and legally binding form.

We will be discussing, for the second year, the extremely important subject of international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H. It is important that, in our continuing work on this subject, we concentrate on the illicit arms transfers that are also the focus of that resolution. There is a lack of transparency in the area of the illicit arms trade which is inherent to it by its very nature. There is also a lack of legal constraints to control, minimize or prevent the flow of weapons at the national, regional and international levels, and a lack of an empirical database from which to develop appropriate policies for more effective controls.

Today's illicit arms include surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, anti-tank rockets, rocket launchers, land-mines and AK-47s. There is a well-recognized nexus between the illicit arms trade, terrorist groups and drug traffickers. These symbiotic connections assume dangerous proportions when they are used by one State to cause destabilization in another State. We look forward to working further on the Chairman's working paper which was included as an annex to last year's report, and will support all endeavours to successfully conclude a consensus paper.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, may I assure you of the fullest cooperation of my delegation in our deliberations.

Mr. Ladsous (France) *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the presidency of the European Union, the six associated States of Central and Eastern Europe — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia — and also of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

I should like first of all to extend to you, Sir, my heartfelt congratulations on your election to head the Disarmament Commission at its 1995 session. The experience and commitment to serving the purposes and principles of the Charter which you have demonstrated in carrying out your task as the Permanent Representative of Mongolia are the best guarantee that our efforts will be crowned with success. We extend our sincere wishes to you in the hope that, under your authority, we will move forward in our work towards strengthening international security, and I can assure you of the support of all the countries on whose behalf I speak today.

We extend our congratulations and thanks also to Ambassador Mongbé of Benin who, with his well-known professionalism and skill, presided over the Commission during last year's session, which was one that called for particularly intense efforts.

This session will probably be just as busy since three topics are on the agenda this year.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be one of the main priorities of the European Union in the field of disarmament. The context of international relations has undergone profound change and, as the Security Council recalled at the meeting attended by Heads of State and Government on 31 January 1992, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become one of the gravest threats to international peace and security.

The end of the cold war and the easing of East-West tensions have made it possible to put an end to the arms race and make significant progress in the field of disarmament: the START treaties provide for reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia of almost two thirds. The two European nuclear Powers themselves have unilaterally agreed to strive to reduce their programmes, which is all the more noteworthy inasmuch as they involve arsenals that really cannot be compared with those of the United States and Russia.

At the same time, equally important steps forward have been taken in general disarmament — the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on Open Skies regime, the chemical weapons Convention. These advances are continuing with the development and implementation of a protocol for verifying the Convention on the prohibition of biological weapons with a view to strengthening the 1980 Convention and in particular its Protocol II.

In order to continue these efforts, the international community must be able to rely on international standards, which must be strengthened. For that reason, the European Union has resolutely, in a joint action, committed itself to the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

That is why we welcome today the decision taken here scarcely four days ago by the NPT Review and Extension Conference to opt for an indefinite extension of the Treaty. That decision, as of now, constitutes one of the foundations of international security for the next century. The European Union also welcomes the decisions on strengthening the review process of the Treaty and on the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely also answers the international community's desire for stability and gives the NPT the permanence that will make it possible to achieve its objectives in full: consolidation of the non-proliferation regime, confirmation of the disarmament process and continuance of cooperation in the field of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

For the first time in history, the international community has decided by consensus to enter into negotiations on a universal comprehensive test-ban treaty that would be internationally and effectively verifiable. Such a treaty could not but help prevent the proliferation of all forms of nuclear weapons and would also further the process of nuclear disarmament, thereby helping strengthen international peace and security. The States members of the European Union are fully resolved to support the continuation of these negotiations, which are of the highest priority for the Conference on Disarmament and should be concluded no later than 1996.

The European Union, which supports the declarations made by France, the Russian Federation, the United States and the United Kingdom concerning the moratorium on nuclear tests, reaffirms its conviction that the greatest possible self-restraint in the field of nuclear testing would be in keeping with the objective of international negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

The European Union also welcomes the agreement at the Conference on Disarmament to begin negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for explosive purposes. To contribute to the struggle against proliferation, this convention too must be universal and verifiable. The European Union wishes to see an immediate start to and the rapid conclusion of negotiations on a cut-off convention.

The European Union also welcomes the effort by the five nuclear-weapon States to meet the legitimate expectations of the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT in terms of security assurances. Security Council resolution 984 (1995), adopted unanimously on 11 April last, is a major step forward. The same is true of the national declarations made individually by each of the nuclear-weapon States. The resolution provides, for the first time, a collective, global and concrete response to a major problem. As the preamble of the resolution recalls, it is a step in the direction of further appropriate measures to safeguard the security of non-nuclear-weapon States.

Furthermore, the European Union solemnly reaffirms its commitment to continuing and supporting good-faith negotiations on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament, which remains its ultimate objective.

In keeping with the principles that I have just mentioned, the European Union is ready once again this year to be unstinting in its efforts to ensure that the work of the Disarmament Commission on this topic is concluded in a manner that will be satisfactory to all.

In line with General Assembly resolution 49/75 M, the Disarmament Commission is once again this year considering the question of international arms transfers. While appreciable progress was made at last year's session, this issue remains no less complex and difficult.

In resolution 43/75 I, the General Assembly expressed its conviction that arms transfers in all their aspects warrant serious consideration by the international community. In this context, Governments must further enhance their consultations on their present cooperation arrangements against illicit trafficking in conventional arms, and they must seek and find additional measures to put an end to it. The European Union also considers that legal arms transfers also warrant scrutiny.

The excessive stockpiling of conventional arms in a great many countries is partly the result of illicit arms transfers. Export controls, even though by definition they do not cover illicit transfers, are still a key aspect of international arms transfers.

Again, without underestimating the difficulties, we believe that the work of the Disarmament Commission on this topic can contribute, by clearly identifying the facts of the issue, to establishing the framework for international action in this field.

This year, the Commission will have to deal with a third topic, the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. The States members of the European Union will contribute to the proposed review in

the light of the major developments that have occurred in international relations since the Declaration was adopted.

The European Union would also like to assure you once again, Sir, of its full cooperation in ensuring that the debate on nuclear disarmament is concluded and in seeing to it that work progresses on international arms transfers. We shall strive also to make our contribution to the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

This year is the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. In light of the various negotiations that are under way or have been concluded, it already seems to be an exceptional year. This should encourage us in our work in the cause of disarmament, which is a cause we all share.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): Mr. Chairman, it is an honour to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 1995 substantive session. Under your experienced and capable leadership, we trust that we shall make progress in our deliberations this session. Our congratulations are also extended to the other members of the Bureau, with whom we look forward to cooperating. We would also like to express our appreciation to the members of the Commission, who have honoured us by electing South Africa a Vice-Chairman of this session. The South African delegation pledges its full cooperation to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Chairmen of the Working Groups, in achieving significant progress on the Commission's agenda this year.

As a new participant in the Disarmament Commission, South Africa considers the twofold function of the Commission — as a deliberative and consensus-building body — to be increasingly important. It is our hope that, in view of the favourable international climate for disarmament negotiations, the Disarmament Commission will achieve substantive consensus on the demanding agenda items before it this year.

Nuclear disarmament remains one of the highest priorities in the field of disarmament. It is our view that the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament taken by the recently concluded NPT Review and Extension Conference could be the basis for the deliberations of the Commission on agenda item 4.

South Africa remains committed to the ultimate aim of complete nuclear disarmament. The exciting prospect of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, now so nearly within our grasp, has been frequently mentioned in this and other forums. A nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty will be Africa's signal contribution to the cause of international non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

In southern Africa, one of the greatest threats to the stability and security of the region comes from the proliferation of and illicit trade in small conventional arms. Bilateral agreements to control this illicit arms trade have been signed with some of South Africa's neighbouring States, while negotiations are currently in progress with others. South Africa is therefore particularly interested in the work of the Commission under agenda item 5, on international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. The working paper of the Chairman of the 1994 session on guidelines for international arms transfers in the context of resolution 46/36 H provides a useful basis for the continued work of Working Group II. In the context of the work of Working Group II, we look forward to receiving the results of the important study currently being undertaken by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research on disarmament in peace-keeping operations.

It is the view of the South African Government that the uncontrolled and injudicious export of weapons and military equipment poses a threat to world peace. A Cabinet Committee has been appointed to devise a comprehensive policy framework and a system of controls in regard to the arms industry and arms exports.

South Africa's change of government in May 1994 had a major impact on our armaments industry. The country's perception of its defence needs has changed dramatically. A concerted effort has been made to achieve regional stability through the establishment of a security sector in the Southern African Development Community.

Like so many other delegations, South Africa believes that exports of armaments must be undertaken in a responsible manner, with due consideration to the various political, economic, human rights and humanitarian factors. It is our belief that a more responsible approach to the export of conventional arms would in future greatly assist in preventing the destabilizing accumulation of weaponry which too often bedevils the search for peace and stability.

The third substantive item on our agenda this year is the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. Having regard to the many important events on the non-proliferation and disarmament calendar,

it is opportune that progress towards disarmament be reviewed with the purpose of establishing goals which will be pursued for the remainder of the Decade.

There are several other issues which South Africa believes deserve special mention.

In July and December this year, the biological weapons Convention ad hoc group will be meeting in Geneva to begin work on a verification regime for the Convention. The South African Government attaches particular importance to this work, and believes that, through close cooperation, much can be achieved in the short time available.

The second matter concerns the Conference on Disarmament. South Africa remains disappointed that so many countries with the resources and credibility to make a meaningful contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament have not yet been accepted as new members in an expanded Conference. It is our hope that this situation will soon be remedied.

South Africa has completed all the prerequisites for the ratification of the chemical weapons Convention. The South African Parliament will in the near future consider ratification of the Convention with the intention of being among the first 65 States to ratify the Convention before it enters into force. In this regard, we call upon all signatory States, especially those with chemical-weapon capabilities, to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

We call upon the Conference on Disarmament to finalize the negotiations on a universal, and internationally and effectively verifiable, comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty no later than 1996. The necessity of completing the negotiations before this date has become imperative.

We also favour the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the Statement of the Special Coordinator of the Conference on Disarmament.

Finally, South Africa calls for systematic and progressive efforts by the nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear weapons globally.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: Sir, I should like first of all to join in the congratulations addressed to you on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for this year, and to express the conviction that, under your able leadership, we will all be in a position successfully to carry out the tasks before the session. For its part, the Russian delegation pledges its cooperation with you, the Bureau and the other delegations assembled in this Hall.

The current session of the Commission is beginning its work in the favourable atmosphere created by the recently-concluded Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The decision adopted by the States Parties for an indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty is an event whose significance it would be hard to overestimate from the point of view of strengthening international security and making further progress in limiting and reducing armaments. As Russia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kozyrev, pointed out at the NPT Conference, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) serves the common interest of securing stability, the prevention of a nuclear threat and of disarmament. Mr. Kozyrev added that, for this reason, the Treaty has acquired a record number of States parties for a disarmament agreement, because they need it as a reliable guarantee for securing national and general interests.

The important results of the NPT Conference also include the adoption of documents on the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and on measures for enhancing the effectiveness of the process for reviewing the operation of the Treaty. The Conference's decisions will be useful guidelines for the Commission in its quest for solutions to the many matters on its agenda.

Last year our country continued its principled course towards disarmament. This policy was confirmed once again by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Yeltsin, in his statement to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, in which he advanced an initiative to the effect that the five nuclear Powers should conclude a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability. He did the same in a message of 16 February 1995 to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

In cooperation with other States, Russia has made active and constructive efforts to achieve further progress in ensuring security and in limiting and reducing armaments. As examples for the world community of achievements in this direction, we can cite the following highlights: the establishment of a sound international legal

basis for ruling out the possibility of an increase in the number of countries possessing nuclear weapons in the territory of the former Soviet Union; the increase in the number of States Parties to the NPT; the Security Council's adoption of resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances to the non-nuclear States; the entry into force in December 1994 of START I, which reduces the strategic nuclear arsenals of two nuclear Powers by almost half; Russia's and the United States' implementation of the process of actual physical destruction of nuclear weapons under the terms of the agreements between them; Russia's, the United States', China's and the United Kingdom's detargeting their strategic nuclear forces; the tangible progress in the multilateral talks on a nuclear-test ban, with a continuing moratorium on testing by four nuclear Powers; and the agreement on a negotiating mandate for a special committee of the Conference on Disarmament on a ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

Significant results have also been achieved in other areas. Important agreements were reached during the recent meeting in Moscow between the President of Russia and the President of the United States of America. Taken together, all this improves the prospects for inter-State cooperation solving matters of pressing moment and provides our work at the current session a positive boost.

This year, the Commission must conclude its consideration of the agenda item on the process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons. We think that the useful work done in past discussions has made it possible for us to move ahead. In this connection, the Russian delegation believes that the Chairman's document that was discussed at last year's session under agenda item 4 would serve as a good basis for agreeing to the guidelines on this item. In the light of recent events, first and foremost of which is the successful conclusion of the NPT Review and Extension Conference, it will, of course, be necessary to amend that document somewhat, and the Russian delegation has some specific ideas in this regard; we are convinced, though, that it would be unwise to go back and start over from scratch, because to do so would most likely make the Commission incapable of carrying out its role as a catalyst in the international talks on these so important problems, as, unfortunately, happened last year in connection with the agenda item on the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament. In the NPT Conference, we do have a worthy example of how consensus can be achieved, and we must take full advantage of that positive impetus in our work on the key issues on the Commission's agenda.

At this session, we will continue our consideration of the question of international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. With the very fruitful contribution from the Colombian delegation, the Working Group on this agenda item has discussed general approaches to further work on guidelines for supplying arms and eradicating illicit trafficking. Various proposals have been submitted on a range of issues on which the Commission must focus.

As we pointed out last year, the Russian delegation, while on the whole supporting the emphasis, in the Commission's further work, on preventing illicit arms transfers, considers it important not to lose sight of the danger to international and regional security of the uncontrolled trade in arms, including supplies of weapons that might destabilize a situation, especially in regions in crisis, or that might bolster international terrorism. In our statements, we have drawn attention to the need to develop and strengthen national legislation and machinery to implement it, in the area of arms exports. We have also addressed the need to establish or reinforce the appropriate international mechanisms and strengthen the role of the United Nations in this connection.

In this context, the Russian Federation would also like to highlight the importance of the efforts of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in working out the concept of "microdisarmament", which includes also the prevention of illicit traffic in small arms in areas affected by regional conflicts. We give the United Nations high marks on the experience it has amassed in carrying out "microdisarmament" — by this I mean the removal of illegal small arms — especially as part of post-conflict reconstruction.

The Commission's current agenda includes a new item: "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". At its forty-ninth session the General Assembly, came out in favour of a review and assessment of how far the objectives of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade have been achieved, and of modifying them if necessary so as to ensure that they address the new problems of our era that have emerged since the end of the cold war. The Disarmament Commission must therefore give a preliminary assessment both of the implementation of the Declaration itself and of the proposals on how to ensure progress in this area, and submit a report on them to the

General Assembly at its fiftieth session, when it studies the implementation of the Declaration.

Mr. Rivero Rosario (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation, Sir, is pleased to see you guiding the work of the Disarmament Commission, and we are certain that, under your leadership and with the assistance of the other members of the Bureau, we will achieve our goals. Our cordial greetings go also to the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, and we assure you of our intention to cooperate as fully as possible.

The work the Disarmament Commission will do this year will be very special. As was agreed at the organizational session, other important events in the area of disarmament require — as a special case, and without setting a precedent — that the working portion of the session be reduced to two weeks. And yet we must conclude our consideration of two of the three items on our agenda. This means that all delegations absolutely must make a great effort if success is to be achieved at this session.

The agenda includes the item "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons". There is no better time than the present for us to be addressing this item: it is just hours since the conclusion of the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Cuban delegation participated in the Conference as an observer, and did its best to follow the important negotiations that took place there. As States not parties to the Treaty were not even able to state their views on the Treaty and how to improve it, I wish today to express Cuba's position on nuclear weapons and their elimination.

As Cuba has said on various occasions, we agree that the best way to prevent the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction is by banning them completely and eliminating existing stockpiles. On that basis, Cuba was an early party to the Convention on bacteriological weapons, and has been participating in the agreed exchanges of data under the Convention and in the work of the Group of Experts on possible measures to strengthen it.

Cuba was among the original signatories of the chemical weapons Convention, and is now considering its ratification. We have been participating actively in the work of the Preparatory Commission at The Hague and, last March in Havana, we held a successful regional seminar on national implementation of the Convention.

On nuclear weapons, members know that on 25 March the Republic of Cuba signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which reflected the commitment the Cuban President made at the first Ibero-American summit, held at Guadalajara. This reflects my country's fresh desire to integrate itself fully into the Latin American and Caribbean community, and signals our confidence in the future of the united Latin America which our suffering peoples today desire more than ever before.

On the occasion of Cuba's signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, our Minister of Foreign Affairs said that this act, in the face of great danger and at the cost of great sacrifice, marked a reaffirmation by the Government of Cuba of the genuinely peaceful nature of our nuclear programme. But he repeated that it would be irresponsible to deny that the obstacles that had prevented Cuba's full accession to the Treaty continued to pose a grave threat to the security of our country.

In the statement he made on the occasion of our signing the Treaty, the Foreign Minister of Cuba noted that the only nuclear Power in our part of the world, the United States of America, maintains a hostile policy against Cuba, including a heightened economic, financial and trading blockade, a strengthened anti-Cuba campaign, and the maintenance by force, and against the will of our people, of the illegal occupation of a part of Cuba's territory which is used also as a transit point for nuclear-armed ships. The resolution of this problem will in future have to be considered a condition for Cuba's continued membership of the Treaty.

As we have said before, we favour the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as the only way to guarantee lasting peace and universal security. It is the so-called nuclear Powers that must be the first to honour this principle. Cuba therefore continues to reject the privileged status of the nuclear-weapon States, which, while retaining that status, demand that the rest of the international community give up the nuclear option, however negative that option may be.

While it may be premature to draw conclusions about the results of the recent NPT Conference, my delegation thinks it clear that, although there was a hasty and fragile consensus on the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the differences on a great many other substantive issues prevented the adoption of a final declaration. My delegation

feels that the absence of complete agreement on substantive Treaty issues on how the Treaty has been implemented and on how to strengthen it, shows clearly that differences remain between the Parties themselves with respect to the content of the Treaty and to the differing rights and obligations established in it. This lack of coincidence in views weakens the very agreement on extending the Treaty.

My delegation believes that the new promises on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and on strengthening the review process for the Treaty constitute a deep and serious commitment by the nuclear-weapon States for the immediate future. A treaty on totally banning nuclear weapons; a multilateral, legally binding instrument on security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; a convention banning the production of fissile material for weapons use and covering stockpiles too; a programme for the elimination of all nuclear weapons; and genuine, effective, non-restrictive and non-discriminatory cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy by all countries, in particular the developing countries: all these are commitments we expect the nuclear-weapon States to keep.

These issues must certainly be considered in the light of the topic of nuclear disarmament, which my delegation trusts will be concluded satisfactorily at this session.

Our attention must also focus on the subject of international arms transfers, with particular reference to illicit transfers, which fall precisely within the purview of our Commission. In our opinion, the document drafted by the Chairman and annexed to last year's report of the Commission, is a balanced document that takes into account the views expressed during earlier exchanges and can serve as a basis for our deliberations on this subject and also on the subject of the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. Our delegation is prepared to participate actively with a view to achieving our goals.

Mr. Sukayri (Jordan): Allow me at the outset to extend to you and to the members of the Bureau my delegation's warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at this year's substantive session. We have full confidence that your diplomatic skills and long experience will help us in our deliberations this year, and I wish to assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation and support.

The issues on our agenda during this substantive session are of the greatest significance, and of extreme importance to international peace and security. As we have just concluded the deliberations of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the ideas, arguments and conclusions of that Conference are still fresh in the minds of all delegations.

Mr. Garcia (Colombia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

As to nuclear disarmament, there have been some positive developments on the global level from the United States and the Russian Federation: nuclear arms reductions in the post-cold-war era have been commendable. Nevertheless, what we hope for is not a mere reduction in these weapons, but rather their complete elimination, for two simple reasons.

Firstly, in the aftermath of the cold war, nuclear weapons should no longer have any role to play in global politics. All the traditional cold-war nuclear strategies of "nuclear deterrence" and "mutual destruction", as well as such theories as "first-strike capability" and the like, have become obsolete and probably null and void. The only remaining major concern in this field can be sought in the proliferation of nuclear weapons and its impact on intensifying regional conflicts and, consequently, jeopardizing international peace, security and stability.

Secondly, the elimination of nuclear weapons, whether immediate or gradual, would certainly lead to the attainment of a world free of nuclear weapons — and eventually of all weapons of mass destruction — and would facilitate complete and general disarmament which, in turn, would ease tensions in the world at large and help redirect financial and other resources to economic and social development. Therefore, all ways and means must be sought to achieve complete nuclear disarmament, and, pending the achievement of that noble goal, nuclear proliferation must be prevented.

As to the second main issue before the current substantive session of the Disarmament Commission — international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991 — the resolution recognized, *inter alia*,

> "that the international transfer and production of conventional arms, including advanced weapons, delivery systems and military technology, have in

recent decades acquired a dimension and qualitative characteristics that can give rise to serious and urgent concerns". (*resolution 46/36 H, second preambular paragraph*)

True, the illicit arms trade constitutes one of the most subversive phenomena in today's world. My delegation believes that all possible measures must be sought to put an end to illicit arms transfers and, in conformity with the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, the first devoted to disarmament, all arms suppliers and recipients should coordinate their policies on the limitation of all types of international transfers of conventional weapons for achieving the ultimate goal of complete transparency in this field. In this regard, and since the establishment of the Register of Conventional Arms, Jordan has been providing the Secretary-General with the required data.

The role of the United Nations in this field and the commitment by Member States to take specific measures are indispensable for the achievement of full transparency and the eradication of the illicit arms trade. We welcome all efforts towards this objective. Effective control over the transfer of all weapons and military equipment is — first and foremost and without prejudice to international efforts — a national responsibility. Adequate national laws and administrative machinery for the effective regulation and monitoring of arms transfers are of the utmost importance. Moreover, strict measures for the enforcement of such legislation and for international cooperation and regional and subregional coordination are, in this regard, also indispensable.

Consultations between Member States within the framework of the United Nations and its main bodies entrusted with disarmament should continue and be improved, especially in the fields of information exchange, the conduct of innovative studies, reports to the Secretariat with a view to increasing awareness of the destructive and destabilizing effects of the illicit arms trade, and the exploration of ways and means to eradicate that trade completely.

Finally, with regard to the last substantive item on our agenda, the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, we hope that we will reach a successful conclusion during this session and thus have at our disposal an effective review that would contain a set of useful and practical guidelines for achieving our goals in the field of disarmament in the remaining years of this century and beyond.

The Chairman returned to the Chair.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I would like to pledge my delegation's full cooperation in achieving our common goals during the deliberations in the coming two weeks of this substantive session.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) *(interpretation from Spanish):* I wish to associate myself with the congratulations addressed to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at this session. May I assure you that the delegation of Peru will resolutely cooperate with you.

The Disarmament Commission is beginning its work at an auspicious moment as a result of the recent decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) indefinitely. During the last four weeks, we have witnessed a negotiating process in which a broad feeling of cooperation and maturity prevailed making it possible to achieve an agreement of enormous importance despite substantial differences on specific issues related to the full implementation of the NPT.

This process has strengthened the standard of non-proliferation in all its aspects as the keystone of inter-State relations, and has made very clear the need to eliminate all nuclear weapons. Given this clear feeling on the part of the international community, the nuclear Powers have shouldered a special legal and moral responsibility in terms of observance and implementation of their treaty obligations. In that respect, we attach special importance to the strengthening of the NPT review mechanism.

My delegation hopes that the Disarmament Commission will take note of Peru's interest in the progressive convergence between the nuclear-weapon-free zones in the southern hemisphere now and those which may be established in future. We can imagine a whole hemisphere free of nuclear weapons. In that respect, I inform members that the Government of Peru will seek the assistance of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) with a view to evaluating possible measures to bring the southern-hemisphere nuclear-weapon-free zones together while respecting the special features of each region while taking security requirements into account in each case.

A proposal to that effect was made by Peru on the occasion of the fourteenth General Conference of OPANAL, which was held in Viña del Mar, Chile, in March 1995 and was also submitted on 20 April 1995

during the general debate at the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

Without prejudice to Peru's permanent commitment to the goal of nuclear disarmament, my delegation wishes to emphasize very strongly that conventional disarmament is an equally important goal, and that in many regions it is conventional weapons that generate instability and insecurity. We are concerned that too much emphasis on nuclear disarmament may militate against the urgent and imperative need to rise effectively to the challenge of the conventional arms build-up. That is why we have repeatedly stated that the international community must tackle the conventional disarmament issue with renewed impetus and deal particularly with one of the main factors behind the build-up, i.e., arms transfers, and especially the complex problem of illicit arms transfers.

My delegation therefore attaches great importance to Working Group II, which will deal with the subject of international arms transfers with special reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. Unfortunately, the existing mechanisms have not succeeded in promoting enough transparency: on the contrary, there is abundant evidence at the country level of covert practices being used to get around the controls and divert increasing resources to military expenditures and the arms build-up. By this I mean, for example, earmarking for the armed forces imposts on exports of raw materials such as oil or preferential treatment for businesses controlled or owned by the armed forces, which may also be stockholders in major public and private companies. The resources so generated are transferred, off the Register of Conventional Arms, to military budgets, and the Register therefore does not pick these transfers up.

In this context, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is an important instrument, but it is limited in scope and needs to be extended to include information on stockpiles, on acquisitions from national production and on new categories of arms. We urge all Member States that have not yet done so to cooperate with the United Nations in this effort and provide the minimum information which the Register requires for it to work.

We are fully aware of the difficulties and limitations involved in evaluating, reporting and controlling these covert practices which feed military budgets and excessive spending on conventional weapons. However, we believe that this is a priority issue which must be studied; in so doing, we should enlist the assistance of non-governmental organizations specializing in this area, United Nations Regional Centres for Disarmament and university research centres.

Peru is pleased to state here that it has provided, at the right and proper time and in the most transparent manner possible, all the information the Register requires. The important Register of Conventional Arms, which we in the United Nations established by consensus, will be seriously limited if the way it works does not take into account forms of State subsidies and economic incentives in some parts of the world for what, in reality, are arms build-ups in disguise. Peru condemns the open or covert State promotion of arms build-ups in Latin America and elsewhere as an anachronism in today's world, whose goal is interrelationship and whose duty it is to overcome poverty and achieve economic and social development for its peoples.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me sincerely to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The delegation of Egypt is convinced that your wide experience will help us successfully to conclude this session.

I should like also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. Nor can I fail to express our deep appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Benin, Ambassador Mongbé, for his wise leadership of last session's deliberations.

The work of the Disarmament Commission fast became more streamlined and effective after the adoption in 1990 of the special report on "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Commission". Last session, we succeeded in drafting the necessary recommendations on regional disarmament and the Commission did set out requirements for substantive information on military issues. Most regrettably, however, it did not succeed, during the 1994 substantive session, in making the necessary recommendations on the role of science and technology.

The item on nuclear disarmament is still before the Commission, as is the item on the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. It was agreed to include both these items in the agenda for this session, in addition to the special item on international arms transfers. We hope that we will make tangible progress on that item too during this substantive session.

At the last session, the delegation of Egypt actively participated in the debate on the item on nuclear disarmament on the basis of the paper on principles prepared by the Chairman of the Working Group. We believe that this year we should concentrate on concluding our debate on this issue and then on putting forward our recommendations on it. These recommendations would express what has been agreed upon by the international community, in other words, what priority is to be given to nuclear disarmament within the context of disarmament in general.

However, we cannot contribute fully to that objective if we do not stress the need to agree on a number of principles, including the need for effective measures to ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 49/73. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, and we must build upon it. Furthermore, we must attempt to tackle that resolution's shortcomings on a number of issues, issues that my delegation took up during the Security Council's debate on the resolution.

I should like to mention, firstly, the negative effects of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on international peace and security, as well as the need to strengthen guarantees in a way that would effectively deter the use of such weapons; secondly, the need for measures that would ensure more transparency with respect to the possession or stockpiling of nuclear weapons or fissile materials; thirdly, the speedy drafting of a comprehensive test-ban treaty; fourthly, the speedy drafting of a treaty or a convention to put an end to the production and stockpiling of fissile materials for military purposes; fifthly, the need to undertake further reductions in the nuclear arsenals of all the nuclear-weapon States without exception; and sixthly, strengthening existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and encouraging the creation of new nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones free of all weapons of mass destruction.

In this context, we must note the special decision taken by the NPT Review and Extension Conference on promoting the establishment of such a region in the Middle East. This issue must be followed up most seriously, because such a zone would indeed promote peace, security and stability in the region.

Reaffirming these principles and achieving universality for the non-proliferation Treaty will have a positive impact on the nuclear disarmament process. In this context, I should like to point out that, despite expectations that the NPT Review and Extension Conference would succeed in adopting a Final Declaration reflecting agreement by the nuclear and the non-nuclear States on a text concerning the review process from the three main Committees, the final result was disappointing. The Conference did not succeed in adopting the Final Declaration or in adopting the reports of the Main Committees. This reflects a complete failure to find a language for dialogue between the nuclear and non-nuclear States. It is worth noting that, while the Conference did decide on an indefinite extension of the Treaty and did adopt a decision to strengthen the review process, it failed to reach an agreement on the review issue.

We believe, therefore, that there is a wide gap between the facts on the ground and the decisions taken. It is a gap that requires intensive international efforts to assuage the deep concern over the nuclear States' degree of respect for their commitments, particularly since the indefinite extension of the Treaty, and over their dedication to strengthening the Treaty to achieve universality, an essential prerequisite for the Treaty's credibility and for strengthening the nuclear disarmament process, and, finally, for ensuring that humankind will be safe from nuclear conflagration.

I cannot fail to stress the importance of the item on the illicit transfer of weapons. This is a most serious phenomenon for our contemporary societies; it is related to organized crime and terrorism. I should like to take this opportunity to express to the delegation of Colombia my delegation's appreciation for its efforts to include this item in the agenda and for the valuable document it prepared during the last session. We believe that this matter deserves our attention, and we hope we will be able to make tangible progress, on the basis of that document, in our debate on this item during this substantive session, in such a way as to cover all the points taken up in it and to help us achieve a positive, consensus solution.

The current changes in the international political climate provide a unique opportunity to improve the security of the world's States and peoples and spare them the scourge of a world arms race. That being the case, we must take stock now, in the middle of the Third Disarmament Decade, of our achievements: we must check our heading and identify the landmarks we need to keep going in future. Despite the achievements of the first half of the Decade in reducing nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and also in limiting conventional weapons, the road towards the noble objective of the Third Disarmament Decade remains a long and winding one.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm Egypt's readiness to cooperate with the Chairman of the Commission and the Chairmen of the Working Groups to help achieve the results we all expect from this year's session.

Mr. Villarroel (Philippines): Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the Philippine delegation, to extend our warmest felicitations to you on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission, and to assure you of our fullest support and cooperation.

The Philippine position on disarmament was amply elucidated at the recently concluded Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nevertheless, it would perhaps not be amiss if that position was restated this afternoon in this forum.

The Philippines strongly supports the early conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations. We also, and equally strongly, support an immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. Achieving a comprehensive test-ban Treaty is an imperative for the world community because it would — we hope — make the first half-century of nuclear explosions also the last. And a "cut-off" treaty would put a cap on the amount of material available for nuclear explosives. Such a treaty would, moreover, strengthen international nuclear and non-proliferation standards, and add a binding international commitment to existing constraints on weapons-usable material.

On the safeguards issue, the Philippines joins the universal view that the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency should not be undermined. Indeed, it should be strengthened.

In respect of the issue of illicit arms transfers and acquisitions, which have assumed alarming proportions, our delegation appeals to the international community to take a closer look at the phenomenon and find ways and means whereby an international consensus to address the problem can be reached.

While we believe in the continued validity of the Register of Conventional Weapons, it should perhaps be complemented by stronger, concerted action by the international community. The Philippine delegation also believes that regional and global approaches to disarmament and arms limitation complement each other, and that both should be pursued simultaneously to promote regional and international peace and security. That is why the Philippines supports the establishment of zones free of all weapons of mass destruction, especially in regions of tension.

In brief, the Philippines supports all efforts towards general and complete disarmament. The Philippines welcomes the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. In fact, the Philippine Constitution outlaws nuclear weapons on its territory. We therefore call on nuclear-weapon States to reduce nuclear weapons production, with the ultimate goal of eliminating these weapons altogether.

It was 50 years ago that nuclear weapons were introduced into human warfare. As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations this year, the Philippines would like to join other delegations in expressing the hope that the anniversary will also mark the beginning of real, earnest efforts to put an end to the production of nuclear weapons, which still remain one of the greatest — and certainly the most deadly — threats to the survival of the human species.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: Mr. Chairman, at the outset, allow me to congratulate you, on my own behalf and that of the Chinese delegation, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. We are confident that, with your talent and rich experience, you will most certainly accomplish this important task with distinction. At the same time, we wish also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election to their posts and to express my gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Mongbé of Benin, for his contribution to our last session. The Chinese delegation will cooperate with you, the Bureau and all the delegations in working for the success of our session.

At the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that has just concluded, the States Parties undertook an in-depth and earnest review of the implementation of the Treaty, took a historic decision for the Treaty to remain in force indefinitely and adopted two other decisions, on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and on strengthening the review process of the Treaty. The indefinite extension of the NPT reaffirms the Treaty's role in the new international situation and its three major objectives: the promotion of

nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the advancement of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The results of the Conference will have a positive and far-reaching impact on the disarmament process and on international peace and security.

China attaches great importance to the Disarmament Commission, as demonstrated by its active participation in every session of the Commission and by its contribution to the Commission's work. We note that, as a result of the scheduling of the NPT Conference and the second session of the Conference on Disarmament, the current session of the Commission has been shortened from three weeks and one day to two weeks and one day. We hope that this arrangement will not set a precedent.

In the two weeks to come, we shall consider three agenda items: on nuclear disarmament, on international arms transfers and on the Third Disarmament Decade, which are all issues of serious concern to the international community. The results of our consideration will provide guidance for the multilateral disarmament process, and, indeed this is where the value and purpose of our endeavour lies.

The agenda item entitled "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons" has been under consideration for several years in our Commission. For various reasons, the Commission has been unable to formulate a set of satisfactory guidelines for nuclear disarmament, thus falling short of people's expectations. China attaches great importance to nuclear disarmament and sincerely hopes that satisfactory results will be achieved at the current session so that consideration of this item can be concluded.

In our view, the large number of nuclear weapons that accumulated as the result of the unbridled nuclear-arms race during the cold war have for a long time subjected the people of the world to the constant threat of nuclear war. Today, with the international situation fundamentally changed, not only is it possible to avoid a world war but prospects for ultimately freeing humankind from the threat of nuclear war through the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons have also been enhanced. At the NPT Conference which ended just last week, the Vice-Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Mr. Qian Qichen, reiterated China's consistently held positions.

Firstly, the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons should be the primary objective. A convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons should be concluded, as have the Conventions banning all biological and chemical weapons. Such a convention should provide for the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons, under effective international supervision.

Secondly, and pending the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, measures must be adopted to eliminate the threat posed by such weapons. The nuclear-weapon States should undertake, by concluding treaties and international legal instruments, not to be the first to use nuclear weapons against each other and not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones, thereby eliminating the possibility of using nuclear weapons.

Thirdly, a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty should be concluded in negotiations to begin as soon as possible and no later than 1996. A convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapon purposes should also be negotiated. These intermediate steps will facilitate the achievement of the ultimate goal of the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons.

The item on international arms transfers has been on our agenda for two years. This issue is now one of common concern for the international community. It is therefore important for our Commission to work out a set of principles on this matter that are acceptable to the international community. Under the able leadership of the Ambassador of Colombia, Mr. Jaramillo, we made some progress in our consideration of this issue last year. Mr. Jaramillo's working paper incorporated the views of all sides and, in our view, can serve as a basis for our work this year.

China opposes unrestricted arms transfers everywhere, and maintains that dumping arms onto the market in regions of tension, which is detrimental to regional and international security, should be brought to an end. In this connection, the largest arms producers and exporters have special responsibilities: they should exercise self-restraint and halt irresponsible arms transfers immediately. In the meantime, however, the measures to restrict arms transfers should not prejudice the legitimate rights to self-defence to which sovereign States are entitled under the Charter.

In the interest of international peace and security, the armament levels of each State should not exceed its

legitimate defence needs. China has always held that international arms transfers should help strengthen the self-defence capabilities of the recipient States: such transfers should not undermine regional or international peace and security, nor should they be used to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States. China, abiding by these principles, has always been careful and responsible in its arms transfers, the volume of which has been always low.

In recent years, illicit international arms transfers have become a widespread problem for the international community and poses a serious threat to the unity, stability and security of some countries. China is in favour of a firm and effective response to such transfers by the international community. In our view, countries must formulate strict arms-export controls in an effort to stop these criminal activities, which endanger the peace and stability of the international community.

The review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade is a new item on the Commission's agenda. China views the Declaration as a guiding document in the disarmament field, as it identifies common objectives and tasks in the nuclear, chemical and conventional disarmament fields in the 1990s. Over the last five years, joint efforts by the international community have led to the achievement of some of these objectives, as evidenced by the conclusion of the chemical weapons Convention and the active preparations, by the signatories for its early entry into force. Some of the Declaration's other objectives are in the process of being achieved: the Conference on Disarmament is actively negotiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty and is about to begin negotiations on a "cut-off" convention. We welcome these positive developments.

Meanwhile, it is also clear that there is a long way to go towards the full achievement of the objectives of the Declaration. While the countries with the largest and most sophisticated nuclear and conventional arsenals have concluded some treaties on nuclear disarmament, it must be emphasized, however, that they have a special responsibility for disarmament and should make further efforts to implement those treaties in earnest so as to bring about further drastic cuts in their nuclear armaments. This would create conditions for other nuclear-weapon States to join the nuclear disarmament process. China believes that conditions are ripe for all nuclear-weapon States to undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or in nuclear-weapon-free zones and to conclude treaties or legal instruments to that end. This should be one of the most important and urgent disarmament objectives of the 1990s.

The Chinese Government has solemnly undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and not to use or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear weapon States and in nuclear-weapon-free zones. This position was reaffirmed in China's national statement on security assurances (A/50/155, annex) issued on 5 April 1995.

In the coming two weeks, this Commission will face the onerous task of considering the three agenda items I mentioned. We are confident that, with concerted efforts from all delegations, the Commission will achieve positive results. My delegation will work in a constructive spirit to contribute to the success of the session.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): As this is the first time my delegation has spoken at this session of the Disarmament Commission, we would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to your post of high responsibility and to express our certainty that, under your able leadership, the Disarmament Commission will carry out its tasks efficiently and successfully conclude its consideration of the main items on its agenda, thereby laying a solid foundation for its work at the next session.

Since the position of the Republic of Belarus on the fundamental problems of disarmament were expressed at the recent Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), I shall merely address a few specific aspects of disarmament.

Belarus attaches great importance to the work of the Disarmament Commission as a universal forum in which all States can participate in the discussion of disarmament issues and in formulating extremely important decisions and recommendations. The current session is taking place in the wake of the successful conclusion of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, at which it was decided to extend the Treaty indefinitely. It is important for the disarmament momentum generated by the Conference, to be continued, developed and reflected, in the manner logic dictates, in all disarmament-related activities.

From that standpoint, the Commission will have to extract, within the framework of the three substantive items on our agenda, the gist of the problems both of what is taking place today and, most importantly, of what will occur in the foreseeable future. Unquestionably, our work will be inspired by the successes in the key areas of

disarmament and by the decisions of the 1995 NPT Conference. However, there is a wide range of internationally supported initiatives in the areas we are examining that require urgent solutions. There can be no doubt that the highest-priority items are further reductions in nuclear arsenals, strengthening the non-proliferation regime for all weapons of mass destruction, a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapons purposes, and a comprehensive test-ban treaty — that last of particular urgency in light of the events of the last few days.

As all members are aware, the Republic of Belarus attaches great importance to strengthening international peace and security, and has consistently carried out its international obligations in the field of nuclear and conventional weapons reductions. Belarus has signed and ratified the Convention on chemical weapons, and a regional seminar on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention was recently held in Minsk for the countries of Eastern and Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. We are now working on a national plan for a moratorium on exports of anti-personnel mines.

In the General Assembly and other international forums, Belarus has traditionally been behind initiatives to ban the development and production of new weapons of mass destruction and new weapon-delivery systems. We are convinced of the need to put in place agreed international procedures for monitoring possible new weapons of mass destruction, and for holding talks on such new weapons as have been discovered.

With respect to the current session of the Disarmament Commission, we believe that the documents before us are a good basis for discussion and will enable us to reach mutually acceptable conclusions and recommendations on the issues we are considering. I should like to draw particular attention to the previous Chairman's working paper on the range of topics on which the Commission should focus this session.

In conclusion, I should like to stress that the delegation of the Republic of Belarus intends to play a constructive part in the work of all three Working Groups, and is ready to cooperate closely with you, Sir, with the other members of the Bureau and with all delegations in the quest for mutually acceptable decisions on the substantive items on our agenda.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.